**West Virginia Executive Branch**
**Privacy Tip of the Week**

**Alphabet Soup**

**Question:**

Sometimes I'm overwhelmed by all the acronyms that privacy and security people use. Can you help?

**Answer:**

Privacy and security professionals use many different acronyms – sometimes it can be confusing! Here's a guide to some of the more common privacy and security terms.

**IP: Internet Protocol -** a method for communicating over the Internet.

**IP Address -** the numerical address assigned to a device (such as a computer) on the Internet.

**ISP: Internet Service Provider -** a company that provides its customers with access to the Internet using a communications technology, such as dial-up, a cable modem, high-speed or wireless access.

**HTTP: Hypertext Transfer Protocol** - the request-response technology that enables web browsers to communicate with web pages.

**HTTPS: Secure Hypertext Transfer Protocol -** enables secure data transmission between web browsers and web pages using SSL or TLS (defined below) encryption. Web pages accessed using HTTP are found using URLs (defined below).

**P2P: Peer-to-Peer -** used to describe disturbed networks where users make resources on their computers available to other users. For example, a P2P network can allow users to make all the music on their computers available to other users. P2P networks raise numerous issues, from security (when users unknowingly allow more access to files than is intended) to intellectual property (such as illegal sharing of copyrighted materials).

**P3P: Platform for Privacy Preferences Project -** a project that developed tools so that websites could publish privacy statements in machine readable language. You can set your web browser to read P3P statements and automatically block (or alert you) to websites whose privacy practices differ from your desired defaults.

**SSL: Secure Sockets Layer** (or **TLS**: **Transport Layer Security**) - encryption technology to enable secure communications over the Internet. TLS is the more modern version of SSL.

**URL: Universal Resource Locator -** a string of numbers and characters that points to the location of a something, such as the location of a webpage on the Internet.
http://www.privacy.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx is the URL for the WV State Privacy Office.

**W3C: World Wide Web Consortium -** the international organization that decides protocols and standards for the web. It has primary offices in the US, France and Japan.